U.S. Bid to Aid Cuba In 1960 Is Reported

4/13/64

By MAX FRANKEL

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 12—A prominent scholar in Cuban affairs reported today that the United States tried to offer aid to Premier Fidel Castro just before the Cuban leader turned for help to the Soviet Union in 1960.

The Cuban leader seemed interested at first but later rebuffed the offer and went into negotiations with Anastas I. Mikoyan, a first Deputy Soviet Premier, the scholar said.

He is Theodore Draper, whose research for Harvard and Columbia Universities has made him one of the most respected students of recent relations between Cuba and the United

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States. He briefly mentions the approach to Premier Castro in an article in tomorrow's issue of the New Leader, a liberal anti-Communist fortnightly of news and opinion.

He said it was a "mystery" to him why the story had been kept secret by the Eisenhower and Kennedy-Johnson Administrations.

Mr. Draper, the author of "Castro's Revolution: Myths and Realities," wrote a rebuttal to comments made on Cuba by Senator J. W. Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas, in a speech on March 25 entitled "Old Myths and New Realities."

Fulbright Chided

Senator Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the Administration's effort to organize a boycott of Cuba had failed. He stopped short, however, of advocating an end of the United States effort and has since said that he favored its continuation.

Mr. Draper defends the effort to injure Cuba's economy and says Mr. Fulbright "could not have chosen a more unfortunate moment" to give the Cuban Government psychoolgical relief.

In recounting the history of economic relations between Washington and Havana, Mr. Draper reports that Cuba began a "search for offers" to displace the United States in the Cuban market, a search that led to the economic agreement with Mr. Mikoyan on Feb. 13, 1960.

"Just before Mikoyan concluded the agreement," he continues, "the United States made an effort—until now a closely guarded secret on both sides—to offer Fidel Castro's regime aid and cooperation. A high official of the United States Embassy in Havana asked the ambassador of a large South American country too act as go-between.

"Castro at first seemed to encourage the overture but, apparently after consulting (Ernesto Che) Guevara (one of Premier Castro's closest aides) and others, brusquely rebuffed the offer and went ahead with Mikoyan."

No Comment in Capital

Mr. Draper said that he did not get this information from a United States source, but that he knew the persons involved as well as other details. He expressed hope that all the information would be published soon to demonstrate Havana's loss of interest in United States support.

No official comment on the incident could be obtained here this weekend.

In his article, Mr. Draper contends that Premier Castro has deliberately worked his way into an economic corner and that he cannot now get out of it with Soviet aid alone.

He says there are lags of up to 30 per cent in promised shipments from the Soviet Union, shutdowns on the island, irreparable mechanical breakdowns and declines in labor "discipline" and "productivity."

More than anything else, Premier Castro needs time and he is willing to buy it from his worst enemies if they will sell it to him, Mr. Draper writes.

Mr. Draper says he does not regard recent British and French sales to Cuba as death blows to the effort to injure the Cuban economy. Unless Western countries become "truly prodigal" in their commercial credits to Cuba on a wide range of products, he says, their deals will be more significant politically and psychologically than economically.

Difficulties Stressed

The comments by Senator Fulbright were ill-timed, Mr. Draper writes, because Cuba is now hard-put to reorganize her economy, its top leaders are "at each other's throats" and the conflict between the Soviet Un-

TELLS OF AID OFFER: Theodore Draper, a writer on Cuban affairs, who said U.S. offered Cuba aid in 1960 before Premier Castro turned to the Soviet Union.

ion and Communist China is forcing Premier Castro to make a painful and costly choice between them.

Mr. Draper says "the one thing that could now pull Castro through every danger threatening him" would be Washington's acceptance of the continued existence of his regime, as recommended by Senator Fulbright.

Havana's embarrassment over the Moscow-Peking conflict was demonstrated anew last week by the omission of any reference to rival speeches and documents in the Cuban press.

Further international trouble for Havana was also suggested by its complaint that Yugoslavia had been "unfriendly, disloyal and offensive" toward Cuba by sponsoring an invitation for Venezuela to next October's conference of nonaligned countries in Cairo.

The unusually strong complaint against Yugoslavia's support for Premier Castro's most bitter enemy in Latin America was published in Hoy, the official organ of the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution, and broadcast by the Havana radio yesterday.

Fulbright Urges Change

WASHINGTON, April 12 (UPI)—Senator J. W. Fulbright proposed today that the United States return to a policy of recognizing the de facto governments.

Senator Fulbright, in an interview on WOR-TV, said the United States should base its recognition policy not on whether it approved of a government but on whether that government was in control.

The Senator agreed with the Administration's policy of not recognizing Communist China. "In view of the history of the last 15 years," he said, "I do not think we can suddenly change."

Senator Fulbright added that the United States could not change its policy abruptly without disrupting its relations with its allies, especially in Asia.

The Arkansas Democrat expressed the view that admission to the United Nations should be based on criteria other than those that should apply to recognition. He said Communist China should not be admitted to the world organization as long as it maintained a belligerent attitude.